

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 H-02 SCS-05 USIE-00 EB-08
COME-00 AGRE-00 INRE-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00
HEW-06 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 DHA-02 SCA-01
IO-14 /063 W

-----111173 280937Z /13

O R 280830Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4430

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY MANILA

UNCLAS TAIPEI 4557

FOR: EA/ROC CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SWEL, TW

SUBJECT: TYPHOON THELMA HITS TAIWAN

REF : (A) STATE 174848, (B) TAIPEI 4540

1. SUMMARY. ON JULY 25, TYPHOON THELMA STRUCK SOUTHERN TAIWAN, BRINGING HEAVY RAINS AND HIGH WINDS INTO THE AREA. SERIOUS DAMAGE WAS CAUSED TO POWER TRANSMISSION SYSTEM, TO KAOHSIUNG HARBOR FACILITIES AND VESSELS IN THE HARBOR AND TO THE TAIWAN ALUMINUM COMPANY. DAMAGE TO FRUIT CROPS WAS SERIOUS BUT RICE WAS RECENTLY HARVESTED. END SUMMARY.

2. ON JULY 25, TYPHOON THELMA STRUCK KAOHSIUNG, PINGTUNG AND TAINAN COUNTIES IN SOUTHWEST TAIWAN. LOCAL PRESS UNCLASSIFIED

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REPORTS THAT THE TYPHOON LEFT MORE THAN 30 PEOPLE DEAD, ABOUT 500 INJURED, AND NEARLY 20,000 HOUSES DAMAGED, INCLUDING ABOUT 2,000 TOTALLY DESTROYED.

3. THE POWER TRANSMISSION SYSTEM OF THE TALIN POWER PLANT, THE BIGGEST THERMAL POWER PLANT IN TAIWAN, WAS BADLY DAMAGED. TALIN NORMALLY SUPPLIES ABOUT 2.4 MILLION

KILOWATTS A DAY, ABOUT HALF OF THE ELECTRICITY FOR THE ENTIRE ISLAND. AS A RESULT OF EXTENSIVE DAMAGE TO TRANSMISSION CABLES AND LINES, TOTAL POWER SUPPLY HAS BEEN REDUCED BY ABOUT 40 PER CENT. POWER IN THE NORTHERN PART OF THE ISLAND HAS BEEN SUSPENDED FOR HEAVY USERS (LARGE IRON AND STEEL, PULP AND PAPER, FERTILIZER, SODA, MACHINERY, AND CARBIDE PLANTS), AND REDUCED FOR OTHER USERS OUTSIDE THE TAIPEI AREA. MANY LOCATIONS HIT BY THE TYPHOON ARE STILL WITHOUT POWER. TAIWAN POWER COMPANY EXPECTS TO RESUME POWER FOR HOUSEHOLD USE WITHIN A FEW DAYS, AND TO END REDUCTIONS AND SUSPENSIONS ENTIRELY, IN BOTH THE NORTH AND SOUTH, IN ABOUT TWO WEEKS.

4. MOST OF TAIWAN ALUMINUM COMPANYS' PRODUCTION FACILITIES WERE WRECKED BY THE TYPHOON, AND ALL PRODUCTION HAS CEASED. THE COMPANY WILL BE FORCED TO RELY ON IMPORTED ALUMINUM INGOTS DURING THE RECOVERY PERIOD, ESTIMATED TO BE FIVE OR SIX MONTHS.

5. OTHER INDUSTRIES SUFFERED LESS SEVERE DAMAGE. CHINA SHIP BUILDING COMPANY, CHINA PETROLEUM CORPORATION, CHINA STEEL CORPORATION, AND SEVERAL CEMENT, PAPER AND PULP, AND PLYWOOD COMPANIES SUFFERED DAMAGES EITHER MINOR IN NATURE OR REPAIRABLE WITHIN A FEW DAYS.

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6. ALL EIGHT CONTAINER CRANES IN THE KAOHSIUNG HARBOR WERE DAMAGED. SINCE THESE CRANES WILL REQUIRE FIVE OR SIX MONTHS TO REPAIR, THE KAOHSIUNG HARBOR BUREAU HAS FORBIDDEN CONTAINER VESSELS WITHOUT CRANES FROM ENTERING THE HARBOR. THIRTY-TWO SHIPS WERE SUNK BY THE TYPHOON, INCLUDING ONE CARGO SHIP AND SEVERAL FISHING AND WORK BOATS; SEVERAL OTHER BOATS WERE DAMAGED. THE MAIN ENTRANCE TO THE HARBOR WAS BLOCKED, BUT HAS NOW BEEN CLEARED.

7. DAMAGE TO SUGAR CANE, AND TO PAYAYA AND OTHER FRUIT TREES IS REPORTED TO BE SEVERE, WITH BANANA PLANTINGS WIPED OUT COMPLETELY. HOWEVER, JCRR CHAIRMAN ROBERT LEE TOLD ECONOMIC COUNSELOR SITUATION NOT REPEAT NOT BAD ENOUGH TO REQUIRE HIS PERSONAL INSPECTION AT THIS TIME.

8. AMBASSADOR UNGER HAS SENT THE FOLLOWING LETTER TO PREMIER CHIANG CHING-KUO, DATED JULY 26, 1977. BEGIN QUOTE.

DEAR MR. PREMIER:

ON BEHALF OF THE STAFF AT THE AMERICAN EMBASSY

I WISH TO EXTEND MY DEEP SYMPATHY TO YOUR COUNTRYMEN IN SOUTHERN TAIWAN WHO SUFFERED THE LOSS OF LOVED ONES AND PROPERTY AS A RESULT OF THE RECENT TYPHOON WHICH STRUCK THAT AREA. IF I AND MY MISSION CAN BE OF ASSISTANCE, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CALL ON ME.

SINCERELY, LEONARD UNGER, AMBASSADOR. END QUOTE.

9. MISSION IS MAKING APPROACHES TO MAYORS AND MAGISTRATES IN SOUTHERN TAIWAN AREA EXTENDING OUR SYMPATHY AND INQUIRING WHETHER ANY ASSISTANCE NEEDED FROM USG. FIRST INDICATIONS ARE THAT OFFICIALS WOULD APPRECIATE LETTERS OF SYMPATHY FROM SISTER CITIES AND USG.

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ORGANIZATIONS AND SUGGEST, IF THEY WISH, THAT THEY SEND APPROPRIATE EXPRESSIONS OF SYMPATHY. SISTER CITIES OF KAOHSIUNG ARE: PENSACOLA, FLORIDA, HONOLULU, HAWAII, PLAINS, GEORGIA, MACON, GEORGIA, AND KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE (NOT YET FORMALIZED). SISTER CITIES OF TAINAN ARE SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA AND MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA.

10. WHEN CALLS ON AUTHORITIES AND OFFICIALS IN AREA AND CONSULTATIONS IN TAIPEI WITH GROG AGENCIES HAVE BEEN COMPLETED, A COMPREHENSIVE REPORT OF NEEDS, IF ANY, WILL BE SENT.
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